Surara
Pakidai

/39 cont./

301 171 This ancient Karaiben /Carib/ custom, which already caught the eye of the early discoverers as something unusual, is also familiar to the Surára and Pakidái, but is regarded by them as very ugly and thus not copied; for the women and girls among these Indians the leg cords are always loose.

301 d) Neck cords and chains of primitive material

● 789 832 It is not ornamentation, but magic that is connected with the neck cords and chains of primitive material.

Thus, young men sometimes wear around their necks an urucú-colored, two-strand curauá-fiber cord twisted to the right, [824] to which is fastened a small piece of the root of the tajá (Colocasia antiquorum and Xanthosoma violaceum Schott) -- hanrẽ. Love magic is involved here (see p. 242). In order to ward it off, married female members of the tribe use two kinds of neck chains. On their urucú-colored cord of curauá fibers, young women tie numerous small pieces of the root of the tajá -- hanrẽ -- and older ones small bits of the camarau (Cipó sp.) -- hií -- (see p.243).

302 e) Hair style

Men, women, and children, after the third year of life, have the same hair style -- mabéu -- cut evenly all around the head, including the tonsure -- hemõno. Shaving the latter, [462] but also cutting the hair are duties of the women, for which they use a piece of reed split and sharpened on one side (taquara -- Guadua sp.--) (see p.119). At festivals, on the occasion of magical acts, and during war expeditions the tonsure is painted with urucú.

[578] According to statements by my informants, it primarily represents a marking which, for the stick duels that the men occasionally carry out, distinguishes the safest and most resistant part of the head (205). This also explains the scars which one

205. Becher, 1959, p. 165.

302 593 sees on the tonsures of almost all the men. They are also present, however, in the case of female members of the tribe, for if a

2: Becher--235 . E-5 (1955-1956) 1960 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18

Surára, Pakidái Waica

/108 cont./

769 182 184 789 526 [266]

festival. It is decidedly a festival in memory of the dead, which characterized by the ceremonial drinking of the bone ashes of deceased members of the tribe. At the same time, defensive magic against the nonexí is connected with it, for they, of course, are the ones who transmit sickness and thereby frequently cause death. As in all the magic cures for healing the sick, where the symbolic struggles between the "hekurá" and one or more "nonexí" are always enacted (see pp. 212 ff.), this factor is naturally also in evidence in all parts of the festival, in the dances, in the mixing of bone ashes, when the medicine man pulls down-feathers of the gavião-real out of the hair of the warriors and adds these, and in the duels performed in a sitting position. The latter are also documented for the Waikâ in the same way, but Zerries writes that neither for him nor for the American missionaries was it possible to find out anything definite about the meaning of this ceremony (517). Presumably,

517. Zerries, 1955b, p. 665.

however, it is the same symbolic struggle between a good and an evil spirit as among the Surára and Pakidái. As yet nothing has been reported about this from other Indian tribes. My informants, however, told me that the Xiriâna, Puseheweterí, and Aramamesterí engage in these combats on the occasion of their festivals in memory of the dead. Hence it seems to be a very special characteristic of the Yanonámi, which in former times may have been even more widespread. Herr Dr. Gerdt Kutscher, in connection with a lecture I gave in Berlin, called my attention to the fact that the position taken by the two men during this is reminiscent of the painting on a clay bowl from the Rio Ulúa, Honduras (518). According to Zerries, Barker,

114 769 526

518. This is in the Berlin Museum für Völkerkunde (No. IVa Ca 22381) and was reproduced in an article by Walter Lehmann (Lehmann, 1910, p. 737, Ill. 9).

Surára
Pakidái

/110 cont./

527 Between the patapáanomão festivals the Surára and Pakidái have only a few other festivities in the course of the year. These are but small celebrations, which, for example, take place after the two-months' training of two young men as medicine-man helpers, after a successful war-expedition, upon moving into a newly erected maloka, and in connection with the second menstruation of a girl. The latter has more of an intimate character, for only families of relatives and friends take part in it.

754 825 4. Magic for Sickness, Hunting, Love, and Rain

a) Magic for sickness:

[824] A magic powder is occasionally prepared from the bark ashes of a wild mimosa species (Mimosa acacioides?) -- hekuráhihenâ -- (see also p. 192) and the bone powder of the gavião-real (Thrasaetus harpyia L.). In the evening, shortly before twilight sets in, if a gavião-real happens to be flying by or is sitting on a tree, the chief blows this powder in the direction of the bird. The latter receives it and with it transmits sickness to a specific hostile tribe.

224 789 b) Hunting magic:

[782] The evening before a proposed hunting expedition the hunter takes snuff-powder and prays for about 2-3 hours to the hekurá (see pp. 200/201), whereby through them he requests [302] Poré and Perimbó (see p. 197) for a successful outcome. Then, before he sets out the next morning, he paints serpentine lines [825] on his face and body with urucú. If his wife accompanies him, she also applies this design, and the snout and feet of a dog that is taken along are painted with the same color. This is [751] supposed to increase the luck of the hunt and is at the same time bound up with defensive magic against possible dangers threatened by poisonous snakes and jaguars.

/111 cont./

832 wearer bites on it and holds it under the nose of a girl or a woman, he gains her favor through the fragrances emanating from it. In fact, I was told that love will then be so great that the woman or the girl would follow him everywhere (547).

547. This type of love magic is reminiscent of a myth of the Aruak /Arawak/ Manao: The Aromatic Root. (Baldus, 1958, pages 32 ff.)

In order to protect themselves from this love magic, married women use two kinds of neck chains. Younger ones [824] have tied to their string of curauá fibers numerous small pieces of tajá root, and older ones, small pieces of the camarau liana (Cipó sp.) -- hií -- (see p. 83). These many pieces of root or liana then counteract the effect of the young men's single piece of root.

754 If a man is angry at a woman because she does not give him a hearing, he can avenge himself in the following manner: [824] On a rainy day he tears off a leaf of the pupunha palm (Guilielma speciosa Mart.) and goes with it into the forest. When he reaches a matamatá tree (Eschweilera matamata Hub.) from which /112/ drops are falling, he lays the palm leaf under the tree. He leaves it there until it has rotted. Out of it comes a worm which the man later fetches and then roasts. If he throws this upon the sleeping woman, she will have no more children.

•789 821 d) Rain magic:

Although the Surára and Pakidái appreciate rain more than too strong a radiation from the sun (548), there are occasions when

[171]

548. In contrast to this, I should like to point out that among the Taulipang, for example, there is great fear of rain (Koch-Grünberg, 1916, pp. 130/31).

/112 cont./

789 [821] [302] it is not needed, for example, before hunting expeditions or during a tribal migration. In this case all the men, women, and children paint their bodies with a confusion of serpentine lines, in order by this means to command the rain to stop. If 526 789 this does not help, a tug of war -- toõtotó -- with a thick liana is arranged. This liana personifies the sucuriju (Eunectes murinus) -- [796] uaikonyá -- which, as a strong water-animal, has the power to induce Poré to stop shaking the rain tree (see p. 199). At first only two groups of red-painted men engage in the tug of war. But if the rain simply will not abate, red-painted women also take part in it. Their participation is supposed to increase the [796] pressure on the sucuriju, for it is assumed that it is of the female sex and thus particularly well-disposed toward women. Such a [857] tug of war often goes on for several hours. In most cases, besides adults, I also saw children who imitated it with a thin liana.

526 789 821 If it happens to rain while the sun is shining, the Surára and Pakidái believe that a serious fight has broken out between the moon, from which the rain comes, and the sun. Then all the members of the tribe feel obligated to come to the aid of their Supreme Being, the moon. They do this by again forming two mixed groups of men and women -- one symbolically represents the population of the moon and the other that of the sun -- who throw wet earth at each other; this "battle" is called xejejõ.

782 5. A Special Way of Showing Gratitude to Poré and Perimbõ

In connection with the festival in memory of the dead (see pp. 224 ff.) after the training period of the two medicine-man helpers (see pp. 143 f.), after the curing of the sick (see pp. 211 ff.), and other magic ceremonies, the people want to thank Poré and Perimbõ (see p. 197) in a special way, outside of the customary prayers which take place through the hekurá (see pp. 199/201). For this purpose a large calabash is filled with earth, [824] into which, in a circle, are stuck red-painted twigs of the imbauba tree (Cecropia palmata Wild.), which are connected

/203 cont./

291 Fig. 11) for the Surará and Pakidai (cf. Koch-Grünberg, 1923,
301 Pl. 45). As adornment the girls sometimes wear cords on their
237 arms and legs or bands across their chests. White and multi-
colored feathers are frequently tied to these cords or bands by the
531 women as much as by the men. The women paint various
382 geometric figures on their bodies, and we observed a typical de-
[386] sign in zigzag form which the women wore on their cheeks. The
pigment was red (made from onoto) or blue, made from a fruit
which the Sanemá call taarimóg, with which the women paint
one another's cheeks. The design is the same as the one which
they on occasion paint on the stones which surround the camp
and which was identified with the path of the sun and of the
moon. They say that the sun is happy /204/ to see these designs.
A very similar design which we saw on the face of a woman was
interpreted for us as "path of the moon." We were not able to
verify with any certainty whether some relationship between
menstruation and this design exists for them.

721 Before entering upon belligerent relations with an enemy,
302 the warriors paint their bodies with onoto. They believe that
● [789] this practice assures good aim and protects them from the arrows
[624] of the enemy. As we have mentioned before, in time of war the
Sanemá take orders from a war chief who is different from the
one who is in command in time of peace.

727 A warrior who kills an enemy returns very slowly to his
774 home, because the "dead person weighs heavily on his chest."
They believe that the híkula of the dead person is inside the
chest of the victor. In there he tries to persuade the man to
[785] "eat a lot." But the warrior resists this and fasts for several weeks,
for otherwise the híkula of the dead person would kill him too.
After this time has passed the híkula of the enemy goes out to his
725 fate. It would seem that the most effective war tactic is to sur-
prise the enemy at dawn when he is asleep. We did not see
Sanemá rancherías fortified with palisades, as we did in other
Yanoama subtribes.

224 The Sanemá, like the Yanoama in general, are excellent
hunters, and many traits of their culture indicate a deep tradition
in this lore.

/204 cont./

226 They also fish, but fishing takes second place and is much less important than hunting.

222 241 Other important sources of food are wild fruits and vegetables, which they frequently obtain. Many local groups devote themselves to agriculture, which they carry on in rudimentary fashion and which they adopt from their Caribe neighbors, but for many groups the products of the earth constitute at present a primary food base.

224 The men prefer to go out hunting at dawn or in the afternoon before the sun sets. During the morning they spy on the game as it comes to drink water or to look for food in the places [223] known by the hunter. In the afternoon the Sanemá hunts birds when they return to the trees to spend the night hidden among the leaves.

The men commonly go out alone, sometimes with a com- [789] panion, or in small parties. They walk with great care, without [826] making any noise, and they believe that in a moment of great danger they can develop such power in their necks that it lifts them above the ground and they fly to the height of the trees.

224 /205/ The hunters prepare themselves in various ways for 777 their work. If one of them has had bad luck, he tries to rid 826 himself of the "dark blood," the cause of his poor aim. He [237] achieves this by piercing, by means of a ray-fish sting, the muscles of the arm or by making small incisions on the forearm. [841] "Dark blood" is produced in the body of a man when a woman during menstruation touches the hunter or one of his weapons, or also when a woman in this condition has eaten any of the game hunted by him.

224 A good hunter does not eat any of his own catch in order not 262 to lose good luck or to miss when he shoots. He eats the game [777] of his companion; of the animals caught by him he only asks for the skull and the ribs, which he carefully keeps in certain places near the rancheria or in his house. They are exhibited [554] there in order to augment his prestige as a skillful hunter, on which depend many aspects of his social life, such as, for example, obtaining a second wife.

/205 cont./

224 411 It is also dangerous to lose an arrow when one is hunting. That is why they only shoot the arrow when, should they miss the target, they can easily retrieve it. In spite of these precautions, the arrow is sometimes lost or remains hanging from an [782] inaccessible tree. Then the man, in order not to lose his aim, puts it under the protection of Omao, to whom he speaks, saying: "Omáuawan ipa ʃlaka toldápala!" which means: "Omao, watch over my arrow!"

224 777 ●789 826 To lose one's aim or luck in hunting may arise from a technical reason or a supernatural cause. The former is due to a weakening of the body brought about by sickness or other causes which influence sight or the strength of the arm. If it is due to this latter cause, the hunter knows the remedy. He goes to the forest and searches for a tree with hard, heavy wood; he cuts a piece and sets fire to it and collects the ashes, which he applies to the cuts inflicted on his arm. If he bears the pain without touching the hurt arm with the other hand and does not shout, his muscles will once again recover their lost strength and the hunter will recover his luck and good aim.

224 776 797 If the hunter returns without any game, it may be because Omao did not favor him, and this is the supernatural cause of his failure.

224 782 [797] According to our informants from the Erebato, a good hunter speaks frequently with Omao, for without his protection he will not be lucky. For this reason he says to him: "Omao awayf ipa ʃálawa hadu kapálama!" which is translated as: "Omao, draw my game out into the open!"

Worse than being unlucky is to lose one's life in a hunting accident, and in order to implore the protection of the other world, the hunter prays, "Omao sátoria palái!" that is to say: "Omao, protect me!"

224 825 /206/ Of course, all these precautions are useless if the hunter has not learned the art of hunting. He must know how the various animals live and how to identify their tracks. If these latter should be fresh, he orders his dog to follow the track of the game; the success of a Sanemá hunter depends in great

/228 cont./

756 may also happen that a sablf with a small "pueblo" of hfkulas in
755 his chest does not have at his disposal a hfkula suitable for bringing
774 about the desired result. In this case, one turns to a more expert sablf, who will receive for his services presents of food, etc. A young sablf is always hopeful that the hfkula "pueblo" in his chest will grow. But the /229/ older the man becomes, the less opportunity he has of augmenting his power.

758 The potentiality of the hfkula of the sablf makes him in-
774 vulnerable, and should anyone shoot an arrow at him he breaks
[789] his hand and his weapons. For this reason the sablf is the best
[624] man to lead as the war chief, or at least he inspires and helps with his magical power and his singing along the way.

756 A sablf of great power does not die until all the hfkulas of
763 the plants, animals, and, some say, of the stars have come to
774 live in his chest, and, when they have done this, the power of
[759] his hfkula grows and brings about his death. Then the sablf informs his people, says farewell to all those whom he has protected during all the years of his adult life, and, as a last service, promises to kill the neighboring enemy group just as soon as his hfkula frees itself from his body. On dying, the red stone which he had, which had come down with a great noise from heaven, once again goes back up to the place from which it came (24).

24. I have not been able to gather any further details regarding this stone, nor have I seen it.

774 The hfkula of a man, animal, or plant, after death, does
775 not go to heaven, but rather congregates in a special place. Our informant told us that the hfkulas of male human beings later change after some time into butterfly jaguars /tigres mariposas/. In this form they continue the life that they had in the man; they recognize friends and enemies and the men of the group to which they belonged and also the enemy men against whom they fought. Sometimes a man will meet a butterfly jaguar in the forest; he realizes that he has met a hfkula of his group or one from a dead sablf. He does not kill it and allows the jaguar to go by quietly without even threatening it with his weapon.

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136 know the world, a few excursions into those terrible waters where the very absence of peril means, for these lowland monsters, the greatest peril of all.

V

* 123 The Samatari had now got quite used to having us in their midst and their primitive fear of us—the emotion which gives rise to an instinctive urge to [609] kill—had disappeared utterly. The fear strangers evoke in them is twofold: they are afraid of being killed, and of having their womenfolk raped. We hadn't killed anybody, and the women did not attract us. We left them in peace, even when they were driven by their insatiable professional curiosity to inspect our private parts.

From being merely tolerated, therefore, we soon passed quite naturally to the stage of having a rather more positive value placed upon us. Soon we were superior beings who had chosen their tribe as the privileged recipients of our friendship. This was without a doubt an auspicious sign for them, and one they must profit by. For the moment the profit which the medicine-man had in mind related only to matters appertaining to magic and moral spheres and had nothing to do with our persons. We ourselves, indeed, were not called upon to play an active part.

* 123 Ceremonies of propitiation were enacted at night. The medicine-man would 756 sit in his hammock with his feet dangling over the fire, invoking prosperity for ● 789 his own people and ruin and death for their enemies (who were doing the same 782 thing, in the same spirit, at the same moment, in some other corner of the forest). But the Samatari had us with them: the effect of their invocations would travel far and fast, like the explosion of the *bombamald*.

* 123 The medicine-man would suddenly sit up in his hammock as if he was cold, 533 and after burbling something incomprehensible, slowly shout out the name of 756 a fruit—for instance, *monama*. The last syllable was held for some time, with 789 modulations that reminded me of an echo rebounding from hill to hill. When this solo was over the men's chorus—they were all sitting round the fire in their hammocks, too—would take up the refrain, reciting a long litany full of mournful verses. According to the brief explanations given by Luis Antonio, the gist of it was: much *monama* for the Samatari and none for their enemies. Let hunger strike them down. They are bad men. A moment's silence would

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follow. Then, in the same fashion, the medicine-man would announce the name of another fruit, let us say *olashi*. The chorus would repeat the same formula. And so on, through all the thirty-two fruits of the forest, the litany was sung. Then it was the animals' turn—those that provided meat. From the noble tapir right down to the worm: might he pass serenely from his muddy lair into the tomb of the Samatari stomach.

When the victualling business had thus been settled, the time was ripe for more general songs and prayers. One little song that turned up I had already heard among the Guayca and other Shirians. The tune was easily recognizable, catchy, even; but the words were strange, and probably not understood by the singers themselves. Then came isolated songs, and broken snatches of tunes that went on all night till the first gleam of dawn, when the priest and his flock gradually dropped off to sleep. The ceremony was over.

It might appear from a hasty glance at their ceremonies of propitiation and exorcism that the Shirians believe in the supernatural, but this is not so.

We often questioned Uarema on the subject, but his reply was always in the negative, and he laughed at the Makiritari's Canaima and the other tribes' Maguaritón. 'We don't believe in those stories,' he answered, invariably, in his picaroon Spanish. The Shirians do not believe in supernatural beings such as gods, devils and their intermediaries. Certain ceremonies of theirs, it is true, are addressed to powers which we should not consider as belonging to the material world, but to the Shirian mind they do belong to this world, like other evident natural forces.

For instance, the medicine-man's cures for the sick possess a value and a methodology corresponding to medicine as we practise it. The sickness—the bad thing—is clearly visible. The medicine-man is a man with a powerful voice, which frightens the bad thing as it might frighten a man. The bad thing is forced to take flight, leaving the sufferer free. Magic, as we conceive it, is not involved.

Another example will emphasize the Shirian viewpoint even better. When the Shirians are shooting the rapids, anyone on board without a definite job, such as steering or paddling, will make a gesture with his hand to keep the swirling waters well away. For us, such a gesture would imply some sort of superstitious idea, for there is no physical connection between the hand that is trying to ward off the water and the water itself. But to the Indians it is rather an example of a purely physical phenomenon arising out of the man's will-power and his determination that the boat shall not be swamped, which his

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771
● 789 gesture adequately expresses. The point is that the primitive has not yet clarified his ideas on the exact relationship between cause and effect, between the wish and its realization—which is to say, between will and reality, subjective and objective. Another clear proof of this lies in the attitude towards pregnancy and childbirth, which we had already noticed among Uarema's people.

789 Even the belief in amulets is one aspect of the complete naturalness of the
831 supernatural! Shirian amulets are made from the dust of a dried leaf or piece of wood, wrapped into a tiny parcel inside a banana leaf, and tied round the arm.
[832] Some of these have the power to attract love, if not quite in the same sense as the love philtres of Medieval Europe. It should be borne in mind that what we call love—for us, the cultural refinement of a physical attraction—does not exist for the Indians. For them, nothing is involved but the physiological relationship, together with the satisfaction of fulfilling an individual need, a sharing of erotic excitement and as a result, the future increase of their stock. Thus the phenomenon of 'falling in love' is not present: it is simply the taking of a man, or a woman. There is no courtship, only the act itself. In the light of this it becomes clear that what the Indian hopes for from the amulet is not success in wooing a man or a woman already known and selected, but a happy outcome of all things sexual, upon which so much depends—the woman, the family and the continuance of his race.

789 The amulet is not a 'charm' such as we imagine it: it consists simply of a
757 substance which possesses the required power by virtue of its own nature—not by virtue of our belief in it—in exactly the same way as some vegetable extracts have the power to produce diarrhoea, and others the power to stop it. As a cure for diarrhoea the Indians take something prepared from a liana, which puts a stop to the trouble and restores the system to its normal state. The virtue of this substance and the way in which it acts is no more and no less occult than in the case of the amulet worn to attract success in love. The curative pill disappears into the mouth and its effects are felt elsewhere. The relation between the two regions is no more and no less mysterious than in the case of the love amulet: the human body is just as real, just as complex and just as unknown as the external world and other human beings.

756 The medicine-man is to be found in all Shirian tribes. He is the witch-doctor
793 and the physician for all general purposes. His superior is the *lahalla*, a kind of high priest, and a very, very rare bird, who possesses wonder-working powers of an unheard-of degree of effectiveness. Uarema assured me that the *lahalla* at

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Pulipuli—the only one then known to exist—could pick out an assassin from a group of ten men gathered for his ceremonies of exorcism. After a few passes made by the wizard, the guilty man lost his hair at one fell swoop, and was thus unmasked.

Endowed as I was with unimaginable powers, I became the *lahalla*. I was called 'Lahallaman'. My watch, by the aid of which I could see the passing of the hours, predict the weather, foretell the course of journeys and cure certain ills (by applying it to the affected part) had also been promoted. No longer was it mere medicine-man's magic, but lahalla's magic.

VI

We were now an integral part of the Samatari tribe and in certain respects their moral leaders. The chief, glorying in his (our) red drawers, gave us the benefit of strange daily discourses in which he seemed to be inviting us to take part in his counsels and share in the planning of tribal activities. I had begun to learn the language, which had already interested me in the Canaracuni days, and was able to reply with a few more or less appropriate words, hoping that they would fit in with what I imagined he was talking about. My efforts were generally crowned with success and everyone shouted with glee at the sight of a white man speaking Shirian.

The world the Indians know, within the limits of their primitive conception, is a boundless forest criss-crossed by rivers and water-courses flowing in every direction. The final destination of these streams is not understood, or even thought of. In the centre of this forest is the tribe itself. Over there are other Indians, known only to few and spoken of from time to time. Somewhere in the same forest there are Indians with beards and clothes, outboard motors and guns—terrible Indians, tall in stature and always bad, angry men: such is the first impression occidentals make on these more apathetic wild peoples. The two of us, envoys of these distant Indians, had shown that we were not such bad men, and not in such a perpetual rage. In all humility and simplicity, we had become part and parcel of the Samatari themselves, and they on their side did not lack a real and disinterested friendliness towards us, as witness the behaviour of the boys, our admirers, who never lost a chance of overwhelming us with their kindness. That I should speak their language was the most wonderful

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point, we pronounced that magic word 'work'—so potent that in the very act of pilfering, their hands were stayed.

We had brought with us a flask of mercury, for amalgamating metals, which aroused their curiosity—curiosity which turned to absolute amazement when they picked it up and became aware of its inordinate weight. By some dark and labyrinthine thought-processes, no doubt, they deduced that this terrible liquid constituted a bomb, and they drew back in horror shouting '*Bomba Amio*'.[1]

We didn't disillusion them. A little fear and dread disseminated among our porters might not be entirely without point, considering all the uncertain aspects of the journey and the curious make-up of these Indians. Yes, we said, that is the aeroplane bomb, and it would blow to pieces all the Samatari from the Parima, if they dared show themselves on our route. This greatly reassured the Shirians. At first they had been rather scared of meeting with an enemy, but now they could count on this terrifying weapon we had at our disposal, which would also increase their own prestige in the eyes of the nomad tribes.

That night, there were some strange noises in the hut, about thirty yards away from our hammocks. Something interesting seemed to be happening, so we put out our candle and, through our mosquito nets, watched a curious scene.

The medicine-man was surrounded by the rest of the Shirians. He was in his usual position for exorcism ceremonies—sitting in his hammock with his legs dangling over either side. The chief's wife had a bowl of water and was dissolving something in it—something she was taking from a cluster of banana leaves in her lap. When she had put in enough, she passed the bowl to her husband, who held it firmly, slightly raised. Then he waited. Suddenly, on an unexpectedly powerful note, a chant came from the medicine-man. Then the chief drank long draughts out of the bowl, came down from his hammock, and began to walk with a rhythmic, solemn step, round the fire. All the men then drank in turn: then the women. Then the babies at their breasts were made to touch the bowl with their lips. Now they were all marching behind the chief, with rapid, tiny steps that covered very little ground, while the medicine-man himself jumped from his hammock and brought up the rear.

We were watching the Drinking of the Ashes—a ceremony symbolic of

[1] Their rendering of the Spanish '*avion*' (aeroplane bomb).

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cannibalism. When someone dies in battle, or through some other violence—when he dies, that is, in the full prime of manhood—the body is cremated on a pyre and the ashes scrupulously gathered. Mixing these to a paste with water, they make a block which is wrapped in banana leaves and kept for the ceremony of the Drinking, by which they believe that the dead man's strength can enter their own bodies. Such ceremonies generally take place at large assemblies, people from neighbouring tribes also being present, and the festivities may last several days. Our Indians, however, wanting to assure a good augury for the voyage they were about to undertake with us, had limited themselves to a shortened version of the usual ceremony, since in these particular circumstances there was neither the time nor the opportunity for more.

II

In three little canoes, two of them the property of Frenario's people, we went down the Yevarehuri, making for the point where it is joined by a slightly smaller, darker stream flowing from the south—the Matahuri. It had been raining ceaselessly for days and the rivers were overflowing their banks, which made it difficult to find a camping-place for the night.

On the second day we had two fair-sized falls to negotiate. The third day's paddling brought us to the Marahuri, but we left it to the right of us, its mouth being apparently quite blocked by fallen trees, and entered a smaller stream just to the south of it, which offered quiet water and a clearly defined course between the giant vegetation of both banks. The Shirians told us that this new waterway was called the Toroli—that is, the Turtle—and that we had only to go up to the source to find the track crossing the cordillera which led to the north side of the Upper Parima river.

Our crew was hardly sufficient and progress was exasperatingly slow. Happily, there was plenty of game. Guans and curassow were plentiful, as well as monkeys and sloths—the Indians' favourite dish.

Our head man was a real lead-swinger. From the first day onwards he complained of a pain in his foot which made him draw the line at heavy work. Under the drenching rains that fell with every interminable afternoon, he would sit in the middle of the canoe, and also in the middle of the bananas we were carrying, holding a palm frond over his head. If we urged him to do

6: Vinci T-5 (1950) 1959 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18
Sanema

leaven, wanted one thing more: the nail, the nail that had been his perpetual bane! We had plenty with us, and gave him half a dozen.

We sat around big festive fires (though, alas, we had no fine beast to cook on them!) and the medicine-man exorcized their new possessions with his chants. That night we slept tighter than we had ever done since the time when we had drunk cacire on the Yevarchuri.

VII

The next morning's dawn was silent as the tomb, and drowsily we sensed a strange difference. Then, all of a sudden, we woke to the realization that the Shirians were gone. Men, women, children and dogs had vanished into the depths of the night. The fires hadn't been made up for some time and were nearly all out. The hammocks were still swinging in their places—it was not unusual for them to be abandoned and it had happened before, because being simply lianas and tree-bark they were very easily replaced.

Carmine fired off a few shots. The forest swallowed them up without even an echo. Our enthusiasm had betrayed us once more. We should have postponed the pay-off until the arrival of the promised Shirians, and then our men would not have shot the moon. As it was, we could only wait in the hope that the others would turn up, though it might well be that the medicine-man and his brother had invented them so that they could satisfy us and be off.... Dear, damnable brigand brother, with the gentle, brooding look that was like the cloudy sweetness of fermenting wine, off and away through the forest, leading his little band back over the familiar path, back to the river on the other side of the mountain—laden with our goods, and proud owner of the nail! The greatest experience of his lifetime was over now, and he was hardly to be blamed for having gone off in the middle of the night, without saying good-bye. How could anyone guess what reasons prompted him—a rebel, an anarchist, a wild savage from the Amazon mountains, who in a moment of weakness had joined up with an expedition of flat-foots, men incapable of keeping alive without a mountain of tins!

There was nothing to be done about it, because the situation itself was without remedy. If the new Shirians really did come, the departure of the old ones might even prove to be an advantage. The baggage was all here with us,

/443 cont./

Domestic Animals

231 Dogs are raised and generally used in hunting.

Birds of almost all types are captured when they are found before leaving the nest. Most of these only survive a few days. It seems that the parrots manage to survive in captivity much better than the other birds, so that almost all the settlements have a domesticated parrot. Turkeys and cranes are included among the other birds which can survive and reach the adult state.

Domesticated monkeys are also favorite animals. It is interesting to observe that almost without exception the monkey is the property of a woman. Doubtless this is related to the fact that women nurse the little monkeys until they are weaned. The mother monkey must be killed in order to be able to capture the little monkey.

Small rodents, such as squirrels and vesper mice, are brought to the house sometimes to be domesticated. One family even went so far as to raise a wild pig (chácharo).

231 766 /444/ When a domestic animal dies, it is incinerated outside the settlement, near some path. Its bones are left in the same spot where they were when the fire consumed them.

241 ## Agriculture

Platanos and banana trees occupy nearly 90 per cent of the cultivated lands. Other fruits include sweet yuca, bitter yuca, caumo /malanga/, mapuey /yams/, sugar cane, maize the pijiguao palm /peach palm/, pepper, the papaya, and the sweet potato.

241 824 302 789 302 276 Tobacco, cotton, and onoto /annatto/ are the principal nonedible products. Other nonedible products include a grass whose stem is dried and used for cutting the hair; a variety of root similar to the wild onion is used in magic for hunting, for obtaining a wife, etc.; especially fragrant leaves are used by the women in their ears; and the ingredients used in the processing of "yopo," a narcotic which is blown into the nose.

/486 cont./

825 821 [794] Animals do not have spirits. The thunder is the voice of certain creatures who dwell in the clouds. Frequently I have heard the Guaika say: "Listen to how many there are!"

Lightning is a creature similar to a flame /llama, "flame." "llama"/, which during storms leaps to earth in order to eat trees.

"Ekoa" and "Koje" are rivers in the sky. "Omoa" is the one 776 who pours the water from these rivers over the land. The "amajini" are like human beings, but smaller, who live under the surface of the earth.

[753] "Sulilliwa" can hide himself in the settlements and cause sicknesses. "Wakaliwa" can get into the human body and cause sickness.

821 The wind is regarded as a very terrible enemy, and they believe that it is sent by an enemy. When a storm approaches, the men go out and try to turn it toward an enemy settlement, or at least they hope to be able to turn it away from their own settlement.

● 789 754 Sorcery and magic are practiced by most of the men. They believe that by taking a little "yopo" through the nasal passage they may have a greater influence on the spirits. There are re- [756] ligious advisers who apparently know the spirits and recommend the measures which must be taken against them.

802 Numbers and Measures

The Guaika /Waica/ have words to designate "one" and "two." Above these quantities it is necessary to say "few," "several," "many," "a great many," "all," etc. They can say two and one, or two and two, but they generally do not do this. They show exact numbers higher than two by raising their fingers. I have seen them cross the dwelling to see if a person is holding up three or four fingers in the semidarkness. /487/ I have asked for as many as 12 objects and received the exact quantity by showing them four fingers of my hand three consecutive times. They understand this, but to express the idea of 11 is quite difficult for them to understand.

11: Chagnon E-5 (1964-1968) 1968 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18

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Fig. 2-5. Thatching a new roof with leaves.

The Indians do not like the wind because it blows the leaves off the roof. They do not tie the leaves down, depending on age and the rain to pack them into a homogeneous layer. They sometimes throw long sticks and brush on the roof to keep the wind from blowing the leaves away, but their major defense is magic: when a strong breeze comes up, the shamans rush to the center of the village, wave their arms frantically, and shout incantations to Wadoriwä, the spirit of the wind, enjoining him to stop blowing the leaves off the roof.

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The Yanomamö make another kind of shelter when they travel. It can be erected in less than a half-hour. A long front pole is selected and joined to two shorter back poles with two sticks. The roof structure thus fashioned is triangular in shape, about

342 484

11: Chagnon E-5 (1964-1968) 1968 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18

Another important cultivated plant is tobacco. Since men, women, and children all chew tobacco, the patch of ground devoted to its cultivation is quite large. Each family grows its own supply and jealously guards it. It is one of the most commonly stolen crops and, therefore, frequently has a conspicuous stick fence around it to draw the thief's attention to the fact that its owner shows a strong concern for its welfare. A man will even put a fence between his own tobacco and that of his father, should the two crops be planted side by side, and neither man can take a plant belonging to the other without permission. I also saw a young man place a number of sharpened bones in the ground near his tobacco patch so that a thief might suffer a serious foot wound should he trespass.

Cotton is the last plant to which major significance can be attached. The fibers are separated by hand from the seeds and spun into thread with a stick whorl, then several threads are twisted into a thick yarn. The yarn is rolled into balls about the size of a grapefruit and stored until enough has been accumulated to make a hammock. Frequently the balls of yarn are traded to the members of other villages.

The hammocks are manufactured on a crude frame consisting of two upright poles located about 6 feet from each other. The yarn is wrapped around and around the two poles until the desired width of the hammock is reached, usually about a yard, perhaps a little more. About a dozen vertical seams are braided into the horizontal strands of yarn; the poles are removed after the ends of the hammock have been tied with a few strands of cotton string, and the new hammock is completed (see Fig. 2-7). The women also use the yarn to make a short waistband, armband, and halter, and the men use it to make fat, round belts. All ages and sexes use it as a wrist, ankle, knee, and chest cord, and the men make a waist cord of the string, to which they tie their penis foreskins.

Numerous other plants are cultivated in the gardens, but are not as significant in everyday life as those discussed. They include leaf fibers, *bixa* pigment, avocados, drugs, water gourds and gourds for making spoons and ladles, a kind of squash whose seeds are eaten and whose yellow flowers are used by the young girls as decorations, sugar cane, cashew trees, papaya fruit, hot peppers, and a host of magical plants.

Most of the magical plants are associated with benevolent or at least nonmischievous functions. "Female charms" (*sua hãrõ*), for example, are used by men to make women more receptive to sexual advances. The dried leaves of the magical plant are mixed with a fragrant wood, and the resulting powder is said to be able to make a reluctant female hunger for sex. Most men carry a small packet of this at all times. The powder is held in the palm of the hand, which is then held firmly against the nose of the female: She is forced to breathe it into her lungs. After she has done this, she becomes very receptive, and can thereafter be easily seduced by the man who charmed her. Another magical plant is cultivated by the women. Its leaves are thrown on the men when they have club fights because it allegedly keeps their tempers under control and prevents the fight from escalating to shooting. Still other plants are cultivated to insure that male or female children grow up to be healthy adults, a different plant being associated with each sex.

Some of the plants are cultivated for malevolent purposes, such as causing the women in enemy villages to have miscarriages or pains in the back when they are preg-